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Anthony Ligon
41 Maple St
New Haven CT 06511

4/23/2015

Dear Senator Fonfara, Representative Berger, and members of the Finance committee,

My name is Anthony Ligon, and I am here to speak in support of Senate Bill 1135: *An Act Establishing a Sustainable Path for Maintaining the Budget Reserve Fund and Reducing the Effect of Revenue Volatility on the State Budget*. I came here to support this bill and ask you to raise revenue to increase funding for human services to cover for the true cost of care for those most in need, and raise revenue so that we can make at least \$15 per hour.

I am a homecare provider and I live in New Haven. The state funds almost 100 percent of our jobs by providing our clients with a budget to pay us to care for them. I'm worried that funding for our jobs will be cut because the state is facing tough economic times. I know about budgeting. I do it all the time for my clients and myself. Trying to survive off pennies a day is no way to live.

I've been a caregiver all my life, even before I got paid for it. This is something I do that comes from the heart, it's a passion for me. My great grandmother has Alzheimer's and my cousin has down syndrome, and I've always helped care for them.

I became a homecare worker in 2013. My patient has a traumatic brain injury. He came home 5 years ago in a vegetative state, but thanks to the 24-hour-care of homecare workers like me, he has made a lot of progress. I do overnight care for him and he needs help with walking and balance even to go to and from the bathroom. He is nonverbal and we are working with him on relearning to speak – but without caregivers like me, he would not be able to progress in life, and his family members wouldn't be able to

carry on with their lives and hold jobs because they would have to care for him around the clock.

I am 22 years old and want to make this type of work my career. However, the wages are so low that I can't afford to go to school, I can't afford to buy or maintain a car, and I can't afford day-to-day living. I live with my grandmother and I rely on food stamps just to put food on the table. Because the bus doesn't run all the way to my client's house, I have to budget over two hours each way to take both a bus and a taxi to work every day.

Just like my client deserves care that will allow him to progress in life, I also deserve wages that will allow me to progress, to better myself through education, and to do the work I love without having to rely on government assistance. Please raise enough revenue so the state can increase funding for human services, and homecare workers like me can make a minimum of \$15 per hour.

Thank you,

Anthony Ligon (anthony.ligon@aol.com)